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THE UNSOLVED MYSTERY OF COALITION COMMAND AND CONTROL

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
of the JMO Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily  
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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## **Abstract**

The current U.S. National Security Strategy places great emphasis on multinational cooperation and execution for all facets of the Global War on Terror. Current political realities and the stretched state of our deployed military forces are likely to increase that focus during President Bush's second term and beyond. While working through alliances and coalitions for missions as diverse as peacekeeping or conventional war, Command and Control (C2) problems continue to severely limit multinational military effectiveness.

Despite multiple post-Cold War military interventions shared by the U.S. and its European allies, a readily adaptable or in-place C2 structure remains elusive. This has led to the twofold problem of decreasing warfighting effectiveness and jeopardizing some or all of coalition objectives. However, a successful C2 structure is attainable through steadfast insistence on unity of effort, doctrinal advances, and assured multinational interoperability.

Several recent examples of NATO or coalition Command and Control failures exemplify how this critical principle of war continues to be neglected at the expense of money, time, and lives. Current endeavors to strengthen the ability of NATO or coalitions to establish clear, functional command structures are investigated. Finally, some recommendations and simplified examples for how they might play out in potential scenarios serve to illustrate how multinational military operations can be improved.

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## **Introduction**

Emphasis on alliances and coalitions is no passing fad. Despite perceptions or policy to the contrary, the current National Security Strategy (NSS) published shortly after the events of 9/11 proposes strengthening multinational institutions, dialogue, and coalition defenses in each of its nine chapters. While the idea of unilateral preemption is included in the NSS, its major themes are almost entirely devoted to working with partners to create a safer world.<sup>1</sup> Current political realities and the stretched state of our deployed military forces are likely to increase that emphasis during President Bush's second term and beyond. Whether the mission is homeland security, peacekeeping, or conventional war, American military policy is committed to working effectively with other nations.

Unfortunately, that effectiveness is more of a goal than reality, in large part stemming from an inability to achieve a suitable Command and Control (C2) structure that is so fundamental to military endeavors. Command and Control is the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of a mission.<sup>2</sup> Control is inherent in command. To control is to regulate forces and functions to execute the commander's intent. A C2 system consists of facilities, equipment, communications, procedures, and personnel essential to a commander for planning, directing, and controlling operations of assigned forces pursuant to the missions assigned.<sup>3</sup>

Despite multiple post-Cold War military interventions shared by the U.S. and its European allies, a readily adaptable or in-place C2 structure remains elusive. This has led to the twofold problem of decreasing warfighting effectiveness and jeopardizing some

or all of coalition objectives. However, a successful C2 structure is attainable through steadfast insistence on unity of effort, doctrinal advances, and assured multinational interoperability.

While it uses recent coalition examples to highlight C2 failures, this paper's focus is to provide specific recommendations to coalition building with European partners. The bulk of this discussion focuses on NATO, yet some of the lessons may apply to the formation of generic or specific coalitions with any willing nation.

### **Background and Focus**

Command and control is one of five functional components essential to “protect, prevent and prevail,” the key roles of today's military as outlined by the National Military Strategy (NMS). The NMS emphasizes how the military cannot be successful without a well developed, highly efficient, and survivable theater-wide command, control, and communications system.<sup>4</sup> Centralized direction and decentralized execution should remain any commander's goal, delegating authority while providing specific objectives.<sup>5</sup> Finally, a theater command structure should be both simple and flexible.<sup>i</sup>

It also is fundamental to note that Command and Control, precisely defined in U.S. doctrine, can mean different things to different countries, or within an alliance such as NATO. Operational command or control might be assigned over NATO forces, but this is distinct from full command over all operational and administrative aspects. Exceptions to this rule are “the integrated staffs of the various NATO headquarters; parts of the integrated air defense structure; some communications units; and the Standing Naval Forces as well as other elements of the Alliance's High Readiness Forces.”<sup>6</sup> These are

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<sup>i</sup> Vego defines simplicity as a clear and straightforward chain of command along with clearly defined responsibilities and authority. Flexibility is the ability to expand or contract with changing conditions, including decentralized C2, delegation, and rapidly deployable forces.

the only missions that the U.S. and its European allies have deemed sufficiently important to set aside pride and politics in exchange for unity of command. For all other military endeavors, the NATO allies seemingly give up on the most direct path to unity of effort.

Despite much reporting to the contrary, Europe does see both the need for its military contribution and better attempts at unity of effort.<sup>7</sup> While Europe currently provides major ground contributions for peace support missions, distinctions between “peace support” and combat are becoming increasingly irrelevant. Follow-on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are proving how the two must be integrated.<sup>8</sup> NATO must realize that it is unable to escape the complex task of setting up an effective C2 structure by limiting its participation or mission.

When applying the nine U.S. Joint doctrine principles of war (objective, offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise, and simplicity), unity of command is the most fundamental and potentially most troublesome necessity for coalitions.<sup>9</sup> U.S. Joint Pub 3-0 states, “The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective. In multinational and interagency operations, unity of command may not be possible, but the requirement for unity of effort becomes paramount. Unity of effort, coordination through cooperation and common interests, is an essential compliment to unity of command.”<sup>10</sup> Moreover, U.S. doctrine fails to even mention unity of command in its multinational operations section, treating unity of effort as a foregone conclusion.<sup>11</sup> Most nations, including the U.S., are against placing their forces under someone else’s command despite the potential cost to effectiveness. Unfortunately for those involved in today’s coalition military

operations, coordination-intensive and less clearly defined C2 structures are settled upon before any attempt at unity of command.

Two other U.S. doctrine definitions are important to note. “Alliances” are the result of formal agreements (i.e., treaties) between two or more nations for broad, long-term objectives which further the common interests of the members. “Coalitions” are often one-time ad hoc arrangements between two or more nations for common action. The same source goes on to say that “Sovereignty will be one of the most difficult issues faced by a multinational force commander.”<sup>12</sup> Respect for national prestige and honor may be as important as combat capabilities. Rapport between the nations’ leaders must be personal and direct, while knowledge of the partners and patience are essential for success.<sup>13</sup> Today’s doctrine points to rationalization, standardization, and interoperability (RSI) for C2 alignment and achievement of objectives in multinational operations.<sup>14</sup> It also anticipates that C2 will be much easier within an alliance such as NATO rather than in an ad hoc coalition. But as we shall see, there can be similar problems in both partnerships.

### **Problems in the Recent Past**

By the end of the Cold War, the U.S. was no stranger to coalition warfare. Yet C2 problems have plagued the world’s only superpower and its chosen partners in every conflict since the fall of the Soviet empire. An increasingly chaotic world evolving after the Cold War has only exacerbated Command and Control problems. Recent examples illustrate some of these C2 woes.

During Gulf War I, coalition partners never established a fully integrated command structure, creating a hybrid parallel command and lead nation structure. Gen.



Shwarzkopf commanded the Western nations and was the overall coalition leader, while Saudi Arabian Gen. Khalid bin Sultan headed the Joint Force/Theater of Operations Command.<sup>15</sup> The two leaders and their staffs were forced into daily coordination meetings in non-adjacent facilities for planning purposes and battle management despite the existence of a Coalition Coordination, Communications, and Integration center. This weakness in command structure was a definite strategic and operational vulnerability. Iraqi diplomacy aimed at its “Muslim brothers” as well as SCUD attacks into Israel were direct attempts to strike at this vulnerability, possibly fracturing the coalition along C2 lines.<sup>16</sup>

Many unfortunate examples of weak or counterproductive C2 occurred during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. As the world watched its disintegration for almost ten years, NATO had the opportunity to work out C2 issues between coalition members, especially in 1995 during Operation Deliberate Force. But disparity in strategy overshadowed productive work towards interoperability and solving C2 deficiencies.<sup>17</sup> The U.S. favored air strikes while European leaders worried about the precarious circumstances of their troops on the ground. Conflicting orders and prioritization were commonplace within what might otherwise have been a decisive show of NATO capability. As late as 1998, NATO and the European Command (EUCOM) C2 structure was highlighted by operational leaders as cumbersome and flawed, requiring additional staffing for Operation Joint Endeavor.<sup>18</sup>

By 1999, diplomacy was again failing in the region while fears of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo by Serb forces required a military response. When formulating Operation Allied Force’s objectives, General Wesley Clark articulated the need to “maintain alliance

cohesion throughout the operation.”<sup>19</sup> For the fact that alliance cohesion actually made the list of priorities is evidence that the operation faced substantial C2 challenges.

NATO began air operations on 24 March without a serious military alternative and with virtually no attention to integrating elements of a land force into the air campaign.<sup>20</sup> Allied Force’s complicated chain of command was conducted through both NATO and U.S. command channels. Among other problems, Operation Allied Force Command and Control boiled down to a NATO and US-only structure, injecting confusion and delay.<sup>21</sup> General Clark targeted Serbian ground forces as the Serb center of gravity, while other NATO nations focused on those forces actually committing ethnic cleansing.<sup>22</sup> Despite the U.S. Army’s emphasis on unity of command, Task Force Hawk’s C2 structure was highlighted as especially confusing and complex.<sup>23</sup>

Critics note that although the operation was plagued by incomplete planning and preparations, highly restrictive ROE, and bad weather, NATO rapidly mounted an impressive although disjointed air effort and was ultimately successful in its goals.<sup>24</sup> But this success did not hide NATO members’ lack of secure communications, information systems, and other crucial interoperability problems, despite more than 50 years of standardization efforts.<sup>25</sup> Most significantly, strife within NATO, its perceived strategic C2 problems and unwillingness to commit ground forces actually *emboldened* Milosevic to stay the course and increase ethnic cleansing operations in Kosovo, exactly opposite of the coalition’s desired effects.<sup>26</sup>

Command and Control woes only continued after air strikes were halted. In a telling example for how coalition members may appeal to their own national command authorities over the heads of operational commanders, Great Britain’s Lieutenant General

Sir Michael Jackson disregarded a General Clark order to make Russian forces withdraw from Pristina airport.<sup>27</sup> Right or wrong, this definitely breached the concept of unity of command.

Another obvious C2 letdown still occurs with KFOR forces divided by nations into sectors. The ability for combined operations between sectors was withdrawn by several national authorities, most notably by the U.S. KFOR still suffers from low troop levels, poor coordination, disjointed information operations, and an inability for a commander to reinforce sectors with another nation's troops.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, C2 lessons learned from operations in the breakup of Yugoslavia have not yet translated into success in the Global War on Terror.

The 9/11 attacks in the U.S. brought a quick and historic response from NATO. The following day, NATO enacted Article 5 provisions, declaring that the attack on the U.S. was an attack against all 19 nations. Putting words into action, Operation Eagle Assist provided AWACS support to the U.S. in order to fill Operation Noble Eagle homeland defense gaps created by Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Operation Active Endeavor sent the NATO Standing Naval Forces to patrol the Mediterranean Sea, freeing U.S. naval assets for OEF.<sup>29</sup> Consensus from U.S. allies and a desire to help was overwhelming, but when it came to the most tangible and complicated piece of OEF, the war in Afghanistan, America largely went it alone. Various factors contributed to this decision, including transportation and interoperability problems.<sup>30</sup> Except for some special operations units, high intensity combat fell to the American led Northern Alliance. But despite U.S. domination of the operation, C2 authority issues with coalition partners still plagued leadership.<sup>31</sup> Although there were more than 11 years

between Gulf Wars to work out the intricacies of a coalition planning cell, communication and C2 standardization was still unavailable.<sup>32</sup> And, priority for manning coalition coordination cells during OEF was insufficient, slowing communication and planning.<sup>33</sup>

The long road from the first Gulf War to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003 facilitated better unity of command for the coalition aligned against Sadaam Hussein. General Franks cited Operations Southern and Northern Watch as invaluable joint and combined experience, especially with the British, improving C2 and Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Information (C4I) capabilities that were flawed as recently as Operation Desert Fox.<sup>34</sup> With a familiar coalition partner in Great Britain, and more than 11 years of trial and error, a strong land and air component C2 structure materialized. But at sea, where many more nations with varying degrees of participation contributed to OIF, C2 problems were more readily apparent. Commanders struggled with coalition participants' differing stances on mission and ROE, where matching the right vessel with the right mission took focus away from other command responsibilities.<sup>35</sup>

The C2 successes of OIF should not be interpreted as if the crafting of coalition C2 structures has reached its pinnacle. While largely successful, OIF's prolonged buildup provided insulation from the dilemmas and time pressures still plaguing the formation and execution of Command and Control. Our guard should not be lowered.

### **Current Advances**

NATO remains the key forum for coordinating a transatlantic security policy and tackling interoperability issues. It is still the major forum for integrating Eastern and

Central European countries, a critical region for future stability. It is an important mechanism for addressing threats to common interests beyond Europe's borders. And while trends are that peacekeeping and post-conflict stability operations could become NATO's key core missions in the near future, that does not alleviate the necessity for an acceptable C2 structure.<sup>36</sup>

Several initiatives now compete for policy and funding emphasis. Focus is shifting from the earlier NATO endorsed European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) to the EU "autonomous" Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP), now establishing itself as the center around which the future European defense cooperation will develop. But NATO initiatives still dominate the picture.

As a direct result of problems during Operation Allied Force, NATO began the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI).<sup>37</sup> Launched at NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Washington summit, it encompasses the alliance's largest efforts to address interoperability problems, a crucial consideration for C2 structure.<sup>38</sup> The European Capabilities Action Plan (ECA) mirrors NATO DCI endeavors to improve interoperability, specifically targeting compatible communications. Both capabilities programs must strive to close the gap between European and U.S. abilities while America continues its Transformation efforts. Special vigilance must focus specifically on C2 initiatives.<sup>39</sup>

While appropriate funding may plague C2 and other interoperability issues, a potential Command and Control windfall is that the Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command is now double-tasking as Commander, Allied Command Transformation for NATO. With headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, he oversees the transformation of NATO's military

capabilities, to include doctrine and interoperability, in addition to other duties as U.S. military force provider, trainer, and doctrine provider.<sup>40</sup>

Some existing NATO C2 concepts now serve as examples for other military alliances. Bodies like the NATO Air Defense Committee (NADC) meet twice yearly to promote harmonization of national efforts and multinational C2 planning.<sup>41</sup> As part of an immediate reaction force, the Standing Naval Forces Atlantic fills vital maritime rolls, sailing with a Portuguese command ship along with eight other multinational vessels.<sup>42</sup> While both of these missions draw little political controversy, their example may serve to inspire confidence along more contentious mission lines.

NATO's latest military force structure is divided into two main types: In-Place Forces (IPF) and Deployable Forces (DF), with both forces potentially subdivided by readiness levels. In-Place Forces are for collective defense, deployed in or near the nation providing them. Deployable Forces are available for the full range of NATO missions, including reinforcement of IPF for Article 5 operations as well as any non-Article 5 operations within or beyond NATO territory.<sup>43</sup>

The newly constructed NATO Response Force (NRF) has materialized to be the Deployable Force and now holds the key to whether NATO (or potentially a coalition composed of some, but not all NATO members) can respond with all the C2 and other requirements necessary for rapid action.<sup>44</sup> In theory, the NRF will answer much of the criticism leveled at NATO's historically slow and cumbersome military response. Initially certified in October, 2004, by the fall of 2006 it should be fully operational, consisting of approximately 21,000 troops. Under a single Combined Task Force

Commander, NATO will possess global reach to include aircraft, ships, vehicles, combat service support, logistics, and communications, available within five days notice.<sup>45</sup>

In August 2003, NATO took over command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, successfully putting on display its growing C2 capabilities. With approximately 8,000 troops from 47 nations, it is NATO's first mission outside of the Euro-Atlantic area.<sup>46</sup>

Credit for much of NATO's perceived flexibility today came from the 1994 summit in Brussels which agreed upon the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept. This idea, paralleling the U.S. military operational construct, facilitates the dual use of NATO forces and command structures for alliance operations.<sup>47</sup> A CJTF is a "multinational (combined) and multi-service (joint) task force, task organized and formed for the full range of the Alliance's military missions requiring C2 by a CJTF Headquarters. It may include elements from non-NATO Troop Contributing Nations," according to the NATO Handbook.<sup>48</sup> To become more flexible, it now clearly delineates supported and supporting commands. "Regionally-based headquarters, with multinational manning" are able to receive forces and support inter- and intra-regional reinforcement.<sup>49</sup> NATO's transformation now includes two standing Joint Force Commands (JFCs), one in Brunssum, the Netherlands, and one in Naples, Italy. There also is a Joint Headquarters (JHQ) standing up in Lisbon, Portugal, from which a deployable sea-based CJTF HQ can be drawn.<sup>50</sup> A 12 month rotation for a Designated Joint Task Force means that one of the three standing commands will be able to rapidly deploy upon notification and provide immediate Command and Control for NATO forces.<sup>51</sup>

NATO has tasked the new CJTF concept with command post exercises like Exercise Allied Action 2003. This and other exercises served to validate RHQ AFNORTH as a fully deployable CJTF, thereby assisting with the further development of the NATO Response Force.<sup>52</sup>

As noted previously, U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) is playing a key role for both NATO and generic coalition doctrine and training. Adm. Edmund Giambastiani, Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command, has marked “coherently joint C2, integrated C2 acquisition, and multinational and interagency operability as chief priorities for 2005.” JFCOM’s Joint Systems Integration Command (JSIC) is specifically tasked to test C2 interoperability of key systems and technologies. Giambastiani stressed that our “partnerships need to be interdependent, not just be interoperable,” while highlighting JFCOM’s support and interface with NATO’s training centers.<sup>53</sup>

Another evolving C2 aid is the Joint Global Command and Control Systems (GCCS-J). It is a C4I system built on top of the Common Operating Environment which facilitates planning and real-time command decision making.<sup>54</sup> JFCOM is tasked with integrating multinational forces with the Common Operating Picture (COP) via secure devices, with the major hurdle occurring where various clearance and releasability issues must be reconciled.<sup>55</sup>

## **Recommendations**

1. American military doctrine has given up too easily on the idea that unity of effort for coalition/alliance operations can be achieved through unity of command. In doctrine or practice, leaders should never accept as a forgone conclusion that coalition operations require more cumbersome parallel C2 structures. Joint Pub 3-16, the primary U.S. source



for multinational doctrine, states, “In many cases, coordinating authority may be the only acceptable means of accomplishing a multinational mission. Coordinating authority is a consultation relationship between commanders, not an authority by which C2 may be exercised.”<sup>56</sup> And, while U.S. doctrine stresses the importance and likelihood of proceeding militarily with allies or coalition partners, it still does little more than mention the importance of C2.<sup>57</sup> How to devise effective C2, where to place emphasis, and how to build consensus towards unity of effort or unity of command is largely lacking. If nations are willing to put soldiers and national treasure on the line, acquiescing some sovereignty for better chances at achieving military objectives should not be too much of a sacrifice.<sup>58</sup>

2. The first recommendation leads directly to a second, more concrete step. NATO/WEU and their partners should establish concurrence on a multinational C2 unity of command structure to accomplish planning and execution of non-Article 5 operations. The U.S. and its allies should be far down this road already, considering likely major contributors to future coalitions are participating NATO members.<sup>59</sup>

Joint Doctrine does provide a U.S. checklist for multinational operations.<sup>60</sup> It currently gives some insight and warning signs if Command and Control will suffer from some disconnect, yet it misses a fundamental issue. To be an adequate commander’s checklist, it should be agreed upon by all coalition partners, and not just a guide for U.S. commanders. As shown, NATO fleets and air defense forces have routinely conducted seamless operations, serving as a C2 example for other alliance or coalition missions.<sup>61</sup> This adaptable “checklist” should address C2 issues for non-NATO sanctioned operations in time of relative peace rather than thrown together during the heat of the moment. If

done so, when a likely “coalition of the willing” plans and executes an operation, a structure and definitions already are in place. There will be sticking points. But with sufficient flexibility built into a checklist that demands unity of effort (if not unity of command), the major obstacles for accomplishing a streamlined C2 structure will have been tackled.

3. Where unity of command is not possible, detailed Coalition Coordination Cell participation/functions must be articulated and prioritized. This cell will be charged with coordinating parallel chains of command, a task routinely underemphasized and understaffed. U.S. Central Command experience can be leveraged for required composition and scope.

4. While the JTF concept may not satisfy all C2 concerns, it has shown itself to be a significant C2 improvement for both U.S. Joint and coalition operations. NATO is almost complete with its transition to the CJTF concept. But, there is much more likelihood of some subset of NATO agreeing to military operations than the entire alliance doing so. In such cases, the existing C2 structure created by NATO should also be made available to non-NATO operations when it does not detract significantly from a European security situation. The existing structure, already staffed and equipped for the C2 role, could be tailored specifically for contributing nations. The JHQ Lisbon, created for quick mobilization and deployability, would seem the perfect fit.

5. Experience tells leaders that perfect C2 probably will never exist, but it can be improved. To iron out or identify potential C2 failures requires exercising the system. Any alliance or potential coalition the U.S. may find itself a part of should continue

planning/training exercises such as Exercise Allied Action. This is a lesson learned long ago by militaries the world over.

### **Recommendations in Action**

Before concluding, it would be helpful to consider how these recommendations might play out under two different hypothetical scenarios.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Scenario: NATO Responds to the Gulf of Guinea**

The Stage: While Africa is not NATO's "home field," by 2008, Europe has taken a greater role in African affairs, especially since more and more of its oil and natural gas has been coming from the Gulf of Guinea. Africa is within the U.S. European Command area of responsibility, but NATO is now better positioned to respond to a regional crisis. A military coup has taken place in country Orange, and it is threatening both the flow of oil and its neighbors with its small army and surface-to-air missiles.

The Response: Not all NATO participants agree to a military course of action, but while countries X and Y have withdrawn military support, the NRF responds with the remaining portion of its fighting force, accepting the retraction of some infantry and communications units by the abstaining countries. The Commander of the CJTF, a Belgian General working at JHQ Lisbon, deploys aboard one of NATO's C2 ships already enroute to the area. Not only has he trained for this type of command, the NRF now under him went through similar coalition training exercises just three months earlier on their Deployable Forces training track. While the CJTF Commander has determined that the missing infantry battalion will not be necessary, he is able to task his own country and one U.S. unit to fill the communications void, assured that interoperability issues have already been worked out by JFCOM back in the U.S.

Limited air strikes, the first flown by Eurofighters provided by Spain, naval gunfire from Portuguese, Belgian, U.S., and French ships within the Standing Naval Forces, and the threat of an amphibious landing by an overwhelmingly capable NRF quell the uprising and result in the return to power of Orange's rightful leaders.

While the scale here seems similar to Operation Allied Force, some major differences are of note: The theater of operations was outside of the European continent; a C2 structure existed instantaneously and included the flexibility to adapt to changing force composition; and unity of effort was achieved by unity of command. The fighting forces received one set of orders without the need to staff coordination cells to fight offensively away from home.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Scenario: A Five Nation Coalition Contributes to Stability Ops in Sudan**

The Stage: The humanitarian conditions in Sudan continue to deteriorate on a terrible scale. The African Union (AU) has responded with a force of 10,000 troops in an attempt to stabilize the situation, but conditions are spiraling out of control. Widespread starvation and armed conflict between at least three different factions rock the area.

The Response: The U.S., along with Turkey, Italy, France, and Spain form a CJTF with the mission to secure Darfur and reestablish security for non-government organizations attempting to bring aid to the region. Because of a preponderance of forces, it is agreed that the U.S. will lead this coalition while coordinating extensively with the AU in a parallel C2 structure.

While this appears to be the classic ad hoc coalition, the newly established Coalition Joint Command and Control checklist eliminates confusion and redundancy. Because the participating national command authorities already had agreed to the checklist during

peacetime negotiations, much if not all political wrangling over sovereignty has been addressed. An unopposed airborne insertion into the region takes place without a hitch, and soon interagency and NGO support is re-established.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

While the U.S. is the “indispensable nation,” it cannot solve all of the world’s problems. Our ongoing experiences in the Middle East have reaffirmed the need for help. While grave circumstances may require unilateral action, the reality is that the U.S. quite often has the political imperative to act in coalitions or larger political-military alliances. Existing alliances, or more likely, “coalitions of the willing,” are the real solution. And while those coalitions can be ad hoc, they cannot be improvised.<sup>62</sup>

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and Europe’s contribution to OEF, the November 2002 Prague Summit highlighted why the military component of NATO should not be neglected.<sup>63</sup> Whether the mission falls under peacekeeping or high intensity combat operations, the most crucial undertaking for coalition effectiveness is establishing a clear and workable C2 structure. While it continues to struggle with its identity and relevance, NATO remains America’s chosen political-military security vehicle. Through its current transformation, NATO may well provide both the proving ground and the example for other coalitions.

Hard work, sacrifice, and compromise are the only solutions for compatible C2 structures. Higher commanders and political-military leadership should not be tempted into believing that technology can or will ever satisfactorily resolve all problems associated with operational C2.<sup>64</sup> The puzzle pieces already exist to construct and

maintain a unified Command and Control structure within alliances or coalitions.

Coalitions must wrangle over C2 in peacetime and leave the fighting for war.

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, (Washington, DC: September 2002), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Pub 3-0, (Washington, DC: 10 September 2001), II-17.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, II-18-19.

<sup>4</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategy of the United States of America, (Washington, DC: 2004), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Milan N. Vego, Operational Warfare, (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2000), 196.

<sup>6</sup> "Ch. 12: The Military Command Structure, The Military Force Structure," NATO Handbook. 29 October 2002. <<http://nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb1207.htm>> [19 December 2004]

<sup>7</sup> Future Military Coalitions: The Transatlantic Challenge, (Arlington, VA: U.S.-CREST, 2002), 3.

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